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ABSTRACT

This document consists of two guides intended for either employers or service providers involved in school to work partnerships for students with disabilities. "Tools for Service Providers" is intended to be used for training local-level providers who are developing school to work linkages with employers. Following an introduction, this booklet addresses initial steps in developing partnerships with employers, recruiting business partners, and sustaining partnerships. "Tools for Employers" is intended to encourage employers to become involved in a range of school-to-work activities from participating in career days and tours and job shadowing opportunities, to offering internships and intensive work-based experiences. Specifically, the publication provides information regarding: The School-to-Work Opportunities Act, options for employer involvement, strategies for supervising and successfully working with youth who have disabilities, disability awareness strategies, providing accommodations, and incentives for participation. Also provided is a listing of resources, including 23 selected national resources, 3 school-to-work resources, and 7 resources for school-business partnerships. (DB)

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Employer Toolkit

PARTNERSHIPS

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NATIONAL TRANSITION ALLIANCE
FOR YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

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Employer Toolkit

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LABOR POOL

Tools for Service Providers

NTA

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The partners of the National Transition Alliance are the Transition Research Institute at the University of Illinois, the National Transition Network, Institute on Community Integration at the University of Minnesota, the Academy for Educational Development, the Council of Chief State School Officers, the National Alliance of Business, and the National Association of State Directors of Special Education. Collaborators of the National Transition Alliance are equal opportunity employers and educators.

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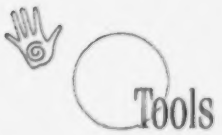
Visit our web site
www.dssc.org/nta

January 1998



Tools for Service Providers

A guide to establishing and sustaining successful school to work partnerships

Published by
the National Transition Alliance
for Youth with Disabilities

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Introduction

If businesses want to continue to prosper and meet the requirements of the modern economy, they must get actively involved in shaping the future labor force. The School-to-Work Opportunities Act passed by Congress in 1994 allows employers such an opportunity. Employer involvement in school to work activities can help meet the need for a highly skilled, entry-level worker pool. Moreover, employer participation in school to work activities improves the quality of the education our young people receive and shows a commitment to the common good of the community.

How To Use the Toolkit

The intent of the *Employer Toolkit* is to increase awareness and knowledge of school to work programs serving young people with disabilities and to demonstrate how easy it is for employers to participate in such activities. The Toolkit furnishes employers and service providers with the tools necessary to establish and strengthen their school to work partnerships. By using the resources, strategies, and ideas presented in this Toolkit, employers and service providers can build upon the positive actions and programs they are already implementing in their local communities.

The Toolkit is divided into two booklets: *Tools for Employers* and *Tools for Service Providers*. As a service provider, you can use the materials in the Toolkit to initiate school to work partnerships with employers. You are encouraged to copy and share the *Tools for Employers* booklet with prospective businesses in your community. This initial outreach effort can serve as a starting point in building a school to work partnership. Within the employer booklet, employers will find a variety of reasons and ways they can get involved with school to work activities. Similarly, the *Tools for Service Providers* booklet offers practical strategies on how to initiate and sustain a partnership with employers. Each of the booklets contains an extensive list of school to work and disability resources.

Specifically, service providers can use the *Employer Toolkit* in the following ways:

Training. State-level school to work personnel will find this Toolkit useful in training local-level providers who are developing school to work linkages with employers.

Recruitment. Localities can use this Toolkit to help educate employers on school to work initiatives serving youth with disabilities.

Resource. Service providers and employers can use this Toolkit as a resource to better serve youth with disabilities in school to work programs.

INITIAL STEPS IN DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIPS WITH EMPLOYERS

Tips for Developing Partnerships with Employers

- Understand the system
- Generate interest
- Establish networks
- Understand employer needs and concerns
- Prepare a community or industry scan
- Analyze the work environment
- Market the program
- Emphasize the benefits to employers

Initiating a partnership with employers can be a challenging task for the service provider. Building and maintaining a partnership is a process that demands commitment from key stakeholders in education and business. Following is a list of suggestions for making that initial contact with employers.

Understand the system. Service providers must have a thorough understanding of the school to work system in which they want employers to participate. An understanding of the system can help tailor the marketing strategy to be used in recruiting employers as partners. Following are some questions service providers can ask themselves before initiating a partnership:

What do I want to accomplish through a school to work partnership with employers?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What are the strongest areas in our school to work transition program?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What are the weakest areas in our school to work transition program?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What do we need from business and community organizations to strengthen our program?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What resources can the business community offer?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What can our program offer to community and business partners?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Generate interest. Partnerships start by generating interest. This is done by informing the community, organization, or corporation about what school to work partnerships can offer them. To stimulate interest in the school to work initiative, service providers must communicate what the partnership is, why it is important, why others should become involved, and how the partnership will work.

Establish networks. Where to start can be a frustrating and overwhelming question. Service providers should begin by establishing networks in their community. A variety of community organizations can connect service providers to the business community. These organizations can include the Lions Club, Kiwanis, and Jaycees; disability groups such as the Easter Seals Society, Goodwill Industries, and United Cerebral Palsy; parent groups; Chambers of Commerce; state vocational rehabilitation agencies; and state and local business education coalitions. Community organizations can also introduce the service provider to school to work resources and special interest groups within the community which, in turn, makes school to work programs more visible. Taking advantage of existing community networks can make the service provider's job easier.

As a starting point, we have provided you with some national resources. These national organizations can direct you to local and regional resources. Space is provided to fill in the information unique to your locality. For additional resources consult the Resources Section beginning on page 17.

Network Directory

National	Regional	Local
Goodwill Industries International, Inc. 9200 Rockville Pike Bethesda, MD 20814 301/530-6500 www.goodwill.org		
Technical Assistance Alliance for Parent Centers PACER Center 4826 Chicago Avenue South Minneapolis, MN 55417-1098 612/827-2966 612/827-7770 (TTY) www.taalliance.org		
National Alliance of Business 1201 New York Avenue Suite 700 Washington, DC 20005 1-800/787-2848 www.nab.com		

Understand the needs and concerns of the employer. It is critical that service providers understand the needs and concerns of employers before engaging them in partnership activities. Communication is necessary to help plan activities and services to meet the employer's needs. Just as you may need to know about an employer's motives, the employer will want to know what to expect from you, the service provider. Open, honest communication is an important step in forming school to work relationships with employers. Service providers who listen to the employer and develop a school to work strategy that is sensitive to the employer's needs and concerns will be more successful in finalizing the partnership.

Prepare a community or industry scan. Service providers need to understand the climate of the business community. By simply looking at the classified section in the newspaper, a service provider can quickly get a feel for the work environment. However, the service provider must also identify the specific needs and interests of the employer. This is referred to as a community or industry scan. A community or industry scan can be completed through an informational meeting with employers in the community or someone from a local business organization or Chamber of Commerce. This meeting should focus not only on current workforce needs but also on future workforce needs and skills. Some questions a service provider might ask include:

What are the key industries and companies in the local area?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What are they key growth areas?

_____

_____

_____

In what industries and career fields are there labor shortages?

_____

_____

_____

After identifying companies interested in developing a school to work partnership, the service provider can ask more specific questions about the environment and culture of the company. Some questions may include:

What opportunities are in place for introducing workers with disabilities?

_____

_____

_____

What types of skills is the company looking for?

_____

_____

_____

What are the future workforce needs of the company?

_____

_____

_____

What level of involvement and commitment is the company willing to give?

_____

_____

_____

Analyze the work environment. Identifying the behavior patterns and conditions required for a worker to perform adequately on the job is the next step in the job development process. Service providers should learn more about the production aspects of a job setting and the activity demands of a particular job by conducting a job analysis.

A job analysis provides information about:

- the specific tasks involved to perform a particular job
- the various work qualifications needed, and
- the environmental conditions of the work setting

As a result of the information collected through the job analysis, service providers can make informed judgements on matching a young person to a job.

Market the program. Service providers should schedule a meeting with employers to explain how school to work activities can help meet their needs. It is important for the service provider to be brief and exact during this meeting. Often, jargon used by certain professions causes barriers and confusion. It may be necessary for the service provider to explain commonly used education, disability, and school to work terms at the start of the meeting. This strategy can help make the meeting run smoothly and avoid confusion with terminology.

The goal of the meeting is to encourage the employer to provide work-based opportunities for youth with disabilities. To accomplish this goal, try to get a commitment from the employer to participate in some sort of school to work activity. It does not matter whether the activity is attending a school to work task force meeting or providing a job-shadowing opportunity for a young person—so long as the employer seems committed. At the end of the meeting, leave each employer with the names, addresses, and phone numbers of other employers who have participated in school to work activities. These individuals can serve as a valuable reference to the credibility of the school to work program.

Emphasize the benefits to employers. Service providers need to explain to employers that they have a lot to gain from school to work partnerships. It should be emphasized that hiring youth with disabilities can help to diversify and build a high-quality workforce. The savings employers can gain from participating in school to work partnerships is another strong benefit. Because employers have direct access to a source of qualified applicants, they can save time and money in recruiting and training. Perhaps the most important point to emphasize is the fact that the employer retains control in the work-based experience of the young person: although youth with disabilities are prescreened before being placed on the job, the employer makes the final decision as to whether the individual will be hired.

RECRUITING BUSINESS PARTNERS

Tips for Recruiting Business Partners

- Clearly define roles and responsibilities
- Target employers most likely to participate
- Approach employers in ways they trust
- Maintain and deepen employer participation
- Help employers make the transition
- Emphasize supports
- Provide meaningful follow-up

There is no prescribed procedure to engage employers in school to work initiatives. However, there are several reasons employers might get involved. They include:

- a concern about the quality of education for young people
- a commitment to the local community, and the need for a higher-skilled entry-level worker, and
- the benefits of school to work systems to the economic health of the community

Knowing why an employer might get involved in school to work activities allows the service provider to develop activities and strategies best suited for that employer.

Some of the approaches a service provider can follow to recruit employers include:

Clearly define roles and responsibilities. Service providers must ask themselves what role employers will play in developing and delivering worksite opportunities for young people. They must keep in mind the program goals, the program scale, and the priorities of employers.

Target employers that are most likely to participate. As with any marketing effort, successful employer recruitment requires getting the message right and sending it to the right audience. Differentiate among the small, midsize, and large firms as well as firms in different industries. Also, look at their histories of school-business partnerships, previous records of commitment and leadership within their communities, and familiarity with work-based learning models. Additionally, service providers can use a community or industry scan to determine those employers most likely to participate.

Approach employers in ways they trust. If employers are to take their involvement in school to work initiatives to meaningful levels, they must feel ownership toward the program. Involve the employers early in the partnership by giving them significant

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responsibility; be able to answer their concerns; use business leaders to recruit peers; and use the credibility of a business intermediary organization, such as the National Alliance of Business, to assist in recruitment.

Maintain and deepen employer participation. Companies that commit to one level of participation might be persuaded to extend that involvement over time, especially as they grow more comfortable and confident in their role. Invite these employers to serve on ongoing committees that govern program policy, reward them for their contributions, and extend an invitation for employers to speak at the local, state, and national level about the school to work and work-based learning activities in which they participate. Continually engage employers in a range of career awareness, career exploration, and career preparation activities.

Help employers make the transition. Employers need preparation, orientation, and support to integrate youth with disabilities into the workplace. Many employers not only have concerns about the amount of paperwork and bureaucracy involved, but they may also have concerns about whether or not individuals with disabilities can do the job. Therefore, service providers need to help the employer make the transition into a school to work partnership. As a first step in this process, service providers should help employers understand that youth entering the workplace are equipped with industry-based competencies. Employer concerns about whether an individual is qualified are valid unless school programs begin to present youth as skilled individuals ready for the workplace. School to work partnerships are successful when employers readily see that the young person has the skills to do the job.

Emphasize supports. Prospective business partners should be made aware that youth with disabilities are carefully prepared and screened before being placed in a work-based experience. In addition, once the young person is placed on the job, the service provider generally offers technical assistance and support to the employer. Technical assistance and support may include assistance in training the young person on certain job tasks, providing sensitivity training to staff, or identifying accommodations and modifications that allow the young person to be successful on the job. Service providers also provide follow-up services to ensure that both the employer and the young person adjust to the situation. These supports should be communicated to the employer as benefits to participation in school to work activities.

Provide meaningful follow-up. Service providers need to emphasize that follow-up assistance will be available. Follow-up assistance allows the service provider to make sure that the young person is suitably and safely matched with the work-based experience and that the employer has the resources necessary to ensure a positive experience. Below are some possible areas for service provider follow-up. The questions serve as a starting point for the service provider to address concerns an employer and a young person may have after a job placement has been made.

Concerns of the employer:

Training. Does the employer need any type of training to ensure the success of the partnership? If so, What? How? When?

Technical Assistance. Does the employer need any type of technical assistance to ensure the success of the partnership? If so, What? How? When?

Tools/Devices. Does the employer need any tools or special equipment to ensure the success of the partnership? If so, What? How? When?

Concerns of the employee:

Accommodations. Does the young person need any kind of accommodation to ensure the success of their work-based experience? If so, what?

Hours. Do the work hours meet the needs of the young person?

Supervision. Is the young person receiving the necessary supervision to be successful on the job?

Transportation. Is the current transportation arrangement meeting the needs of the young person?

SUSTAINING PARTNERSHIPS

Communication between employers, educators, and the community is key in maintaining school to work partnerships. Once the partnership is established, the collaborative effort is greatly enhanced when everyone demonstrates a commitment to making it work. Following are some examples of activities that help sustain the partnership.

Conduct research. Use a community survey to assess the education and training needs of youth. This process will allow service providers to adjust the development of programs as necessary.

Publicize and promote the effort. Develop and publish a newsletter that highlights exemplary education and industry training programs for young people with special needs. Submit a letter or article describing school to work activities to a local newspaper. These actions will foster recognition of the efforts of employers and educators in school to work programs and may get others interested.

Provide youth development activities. Coordinate with local colleges, trade schools or Chambers of Commerce to facilitate business and industry site visits for youth. If possible, arrange opportunities for young people to interact with employees during the visit. Seeing a particular job "in action" can further develop an individual's career pathway.

Provide staff development activities. Employers and service providers should work with vocational and applied technology education instructors, support personnel, and counselors to modify curriculum and instructional processes to meet the career development and skill training needs of youth in school to work programs.

Establish administrative policy. Service providers and employers should look for opportunities to expand and enrich school to work programs and develop policies or strategies to carry out these activities.

Tips for Sustaining Partnerships

Conduct research

Publicize and promote the effort

Provide youth development activities

Provide staff development activities

Establish administrative policy

Conduct periodic progress reports

Recognize efforts and accomplishments

Conduct periodic progress reports or evaluations. Service providers should collect and analyze information regarding the accomplishments, strengths, and weaknesses of the partnership. Measurable objectives must be established early in the partnership to determine the information that should be collected. Evaluation information should be presented in different ways so that it may be useful to everyone involved. Information gained from an evaluation can help you make an informed decision about whether or not to improve, refine, and renew existing programs or activities; to plan or develop new programs and activities; or to allow for the replication of existing programs.

Recognize efforts and accomplishments of participants. It is important to recognize the efforts of employers as well as the young people and agencies that participate in school to work programs. Sending thank you letters, award certificates, or sponsoring an annual recognition dinner is an excellent way to recognize employer involvement in school to work activities.

RESOURCES

Selected National Resources

Following is a list of contacts related to the school to work transition of youth with disabilities.

Employment and Disability Related Resources

The ARC National Employment & Training Program
500 East Border, Suite 300
Arlington, TX 76010
1-800/433-5255
817/277-0553 (TTY)
www.TheArc.org

Association of Persons in Supported Employment (APSE)
1627 Monument Avenue
Richmond, VA 23261
804/278-9187
www.apse.org

Clearinghouse on Disability Information
Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services
U.S. Department of Education
Switzer Building, Room 3132
Washington, DC 20202-2524
202/205-8241 (Voice/TTY)

The Dole Foundation for the Employment of People with Disabilities
1819 H Street NW, Suite 340
Washington, DC 20006
202/457-0318 (Voice/TTY)

Foundation on Employment & Disability
3820 Del Amo Boulevard, Suite 246
Torrance, CA 90503
310/214-3430
310/214-1413 (TTY)

Goodwill Industries International, Inc.
9200 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, MD 20814
301/530-6500
www.goodwill.org

Job Accommodation Network (JAN)
809 Allen Hall
P.O. Box 6080
Morgantown, WV 26506-6080
1-800/526-7234 (Voice/TTY)
http://janweb.icdi.wvu.edu

President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities
1331 F Street NW, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20004
202/376-6200
202/376-6205 (TTY)
www.pcepd.gov

Rehabilitation Services Administration
U.S. Department of Education
Switzer Building
330 C Street SW
Washington, DC 20202-2500
202/205-5465 (Voice/TTY)
www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/RSA/

Marriott Foundation for People with Disabilities
P.O. Box 150
Washington, DC 20058
301/380-7523
301/380-6680 (TTY)

National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY)
P.O. Box 1492
Washington, DC 20013
1-800/695-0285
202/884-8200 (Voice/TTY)
www.nichcy.org

National Rehabilitation Information Center
8455 Colesville Road, Suite 935
Silver Spring, MD 20910
1-800/346-2742
301/495-5626 (TTY)
www.naric.com/naric

Employment Resources

Job Bank USA
www.jobbankusa.com

National Employer Leadership Council
1001 Connecticut Avenue NW
Suite 310
Washington, DC 20036
202/822-8027
www.nelc.org

The National Alliance of Business
1201 New York Avenue NW
Suite 700
Washington, DC 20005
1-800/787-2848
www.nab.com

National Association for Industry-Education Cooperation
235 Hendricks Boulevard
Buffalo, NY 14226-3304
716/834-7047

Small Business Administration (SBA)
409 Third Street SW, Room 8300
Washington, DC 20416
1-800/8ASK-SBA
www.sba.gov

U.S. Chamber of Commerce
1615 H Street NW
Washington, DC 20062
202/659-6000
www.uschamber.org

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
1801 L Street NW
Washington, DC 20507
1-800/669-4000
1-800/669-6820 (TTY)
www.eeoc.gov

ADA Resources

Employment

Equal Employment
Opportunity Commission
1801 L Street NW
Washington, DC 20507
1-800/669-4000
1-800/669-6820 (TTY)
www.eeoc.gov

Transportation

Federal Transit Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
400 Seventh Street SW
Washington, DC 20590
1-888/446-4511
1-800/877-8339 (TTY)
www.fta.dot.gov

Accommodations and Public Services

Architectural and Transportation
Barriers Compliance Board
1331 F Street NW, Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20004-1111
1-800/USA-ABLE (Voice/TTY)

Department of Justice
Office on the Americans with
Disabilities Act
Civil Rights Division
Public Access Section
P.O. Box 66738
Washington, DC 20035-6738
1-800/514-0301
1-800/514-0383 (TTY)
www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm

Job Accommodation Network (JAN)
809 Allen Hall
P.O. Box 6080
Morgantown, WV 26506-6080
1-800/526-7234 (Voice/TTY)
http://janweb.icdi.wvu.edu

The Dole Foundation for the
Employment of People with
Disabilities
1819 H Street NW, Suite 340
Washington, DC 20006
202/457-0318 (Voice/TTY)

Selected School to Work Resources

National Level

It is critically important for employers and service providers to know about the school to work activities in their states. This includes knowing if your state has a School-to-Work Implementation or Development Grant and whether or not the state has received a Local, Urban, Rural or Indian Grant from the National School-to-Work Office. To find out if your state has any funding from the Federal government, contact the School-to-Work Learning and Information Center.

School-to-Work Learning and Information Center
400 Virginia Avenue SW, Room 200
Washington, DC 20024
1-800/251-7236
www.stw.ed.gov

In addition to learning about the projects funded under the School-to-Work Opportunities Act, employers and providers should determine whether or not their state has a Transition Systems Change Grant or any Model Demonstration Projects funded from the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS). The majority of these projects have developed proven practices, strategies, and programs to help youth with disabilities make a smooth transition from high school to employment, further education, and independent living. To learn more about OSERS-funded Model Demonstration Projects, contact the National Transition Alliance. To learn more about Transition Systems Change Grants, contact the National Transition Network.

National Transition Alliance
for Youth with Disabilities
Transition Research Institute
University of Illinois
113 Children's Research Center
51 Gerty Drive
Champaign, IL 61820
217/333-2325
www.dssc.org/nta

National Transition Network
Institute on Community Integration
University of Minnesota
430 Wulling Hall
86 Pleasant Street SE
Minneapolis, MN 55455
612/626-8200
www.ici.coled.umn.edu/ntn/

State Level

Employers and service providers can get assistance from a variety of state and local agencies. Private and state employment agencies, private and state rehabilitation agencies, and private nonprofit organizations all provide a range of services both to employers and to young people with disabilities. Youth with disabilities can seek out these agencies to learn how to write a resume or interview for a job. For employers, these agencies can help fill a job vacancy by pre-screening a pool of applicants; writing job descriptions; training a new employee with a disability; providing disability training to the business; and helping accommodate an employee with a disability on the job.

Because each state is organized differently, these agencies will vary from locality to locality. To learn more about the agencies that are available to provide technical assistance in your community, contact your state departments of Education, Labor, or Human Services, or get in touch with the local Chamber of Commerce.

Local Level

On the local level, forming effective partnerships between schools and business will create the necessary linkages to make school to work opportunities happen for youth with disabilities. Employers and providers should reach out to parents, to advocacy and "grass roots" groups, and to businesses who have successfully employed young people with disabilities. These stakeholder groups will prove to be a promising asset in planning and implementing school to work programs that serve youth with disabilities.

◦ Selected Program Resources for School-Business Partnerships

Many programs using best practices and state-of-the-art partnership strategies are identified as exemplary by professionals in the field and serve as models. Below are some programs that have successfully included youth with disabilities in transition from school to work systems. Feel free to contact either the school or the program coordinators. To learn about other school-business partnerships, search the NTA Model Programs Database on the web: www.dssc.org/nta.

Bridges...from school to work

The Bridges program develops internships with area businesses for students with disabilities in their final year of high school. It gives students job training and work experience that enhance work potential and also gives local employers access to an additional source of employees.

George P. Tilson, Project Manager
TransCen, Inc.
451 Hungerford Drive, Suite 700
Rockville, MD 20850
301/424-2002
gtilson@transcen.org

Job Accommodation Network (JAN)

JAN is an international network and consulting resource for accommodating persons with disabilities in the workplace, and is a joint venture with the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities.

Job Accommodation Network (JAN)
809 Allen Hall
P.O. Box 6080
Morgantown, WV 26506-6080
1-800/526-7234 (Voice/TTY)
http://janweb.icdi.wvu.edu

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Youth Transition Program (YTP)

Policy makers and practitioners across the country agree that the creation of a seamless school to work system for youth requires restructuring current educational systems, but Oregon is one of the few states that have begun restructuring on a statewide level. Oregon's Youth Transition Program is a collaborative effort among the Oregon Department of Education, the Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation Division, the University of Oregon and public schools in local communities across the state. YTP currently operates in 26 sites across Oregon, helping youth with disabilities make the transition from school to work. YTP aims to provide a "new pattern of services" to students with disabilities by achieving two goals: enhancing the ability of students to enter competitive employment after leaving school and creating systemic change within schools and agencies serving youth with disabilities.

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Competitive Employment Work and Transition (CEWAT)

CEWAT is a joint venture between Worksource Enterprises, Charlottesville City Schools, the Community Rehabilitation Program, and the Private Industry Council. These resources work together to structure successful experiences for all students, especially students "at-risk" of dropping out of school. Based in Charlottesville High School, CEWAT was initially created to help students with disabilities find paid job placements and develop good work behaviors. CEWAT provides job coaches who help students identify job prospects, apply for employment, and negotiate any difficulties that arise after they are hired. For more information, contact:

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High School/High Tech

The purpose of the High School/High Tech Program is to encourage students at the secondary level and below, to take the necessary academic preparation and skill training to pursue careers in engineering, science, and high technology fields. In co-operation with public and private funding sources, businesses, and school districts throughout the Unites States, High School/High Tech programs are active in: Pittsburgh, PA; Beaverton and Tillamook, OR; Huntsville, AL; Cocoa Beach, FL; Houston, TX; Cleveland, OH; Montgomery County and Prince George's County, MD; Los Angeles, San Mateo, and South Bay, CA; and Fairfax County, VA. The program provides paid internships and mentoring for high school students with disabilities.

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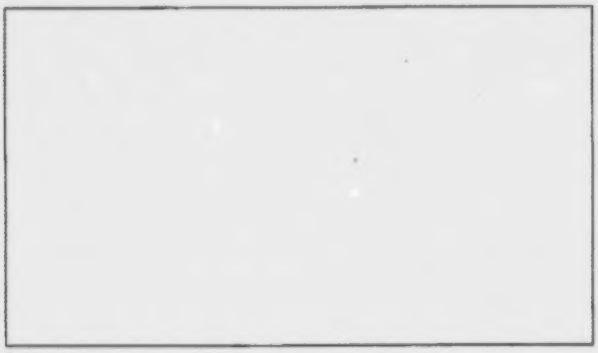
Tools for Employers

For more information on school to work partnerships, contact your local Service Provider.



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January 1998

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Tools for Employers

A guide to establishing and sustaining successful school to work partnerships

Published by
the National Transition Alliance
for Youth with Disabilities

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Introduction

With the changing dynamics of society, classrooms and worksites will include an increasing number of nontraditional students and employees, including youth with disabilities. This trend presents both educators and employers with the challenge to structure a system that prepares all youth, regardless of race, gender, or disability, for exciting careers. The School-to-Work Opportunities Act, passed in 1994, meets this challenge. School to work systems have the potential to encourage employers, educators, and community leaders to work together to give every young person the academic knowledge and practical workforce skills necessary for the jobs of tomorrow.

The nation's economic success, in large part, depends on how well young people are educated and trained—each to his or her best ability. Youth with disabilities are part of this community, and part of the workforce of tomorrow. By creating tightly integrated partnerships with educators, employers will discover that these individuals have a multitude of talents, strengths, and abilities. If cultivated and encouraged, youth with disabilities add to a pool of qualified workers.

The *Employer Toolkit* has been constructed to provide you, the employer, with materials to help advance the employment of youth with disabilities within the framework of school to work partnerships. It encourages employers to become involved in a range of school to work activities from participating in careers days, tours and job shadowing opportunities, to offering internships and intensive work-based experiences. Materials within this Toolkit provide practical strategies on how to get involved in school to work partnerships that serve youth with disabilities.

Specifically, the Toolkit provides information regarding:

- The School-to-Work Opportunities Act
- Options for Employer Involvement
- Strategies for Supervising and Successfully Working with Youth Who Have Disabilities
- Disability Awareness Strategies
- Providing Accommodations
- Incentives for Participation

We encourage you to share the information with other employers and within your organization.

UNDERSTANDING THE SCHOOL TO WORK SYSTEM AND HOW YOU CAN PARTICIPATE

The School to Work System

School to work programs bring employers and educators together to develop successful matches between quality jobs and quality applicants. A successful job match not only prepares young adults for a meaningful career, but also prepares them to be contributing members of society.

What Is the School to Work Initiative?

President Clinton signed the School-to-Work Opportunities Act in 1994 to encourage partnerships among employers, educators, and other key stakeholders to build quality school to work systems that prepare young people for high-wage, high-skill careers. The Act is administered by both the U.S. Departments of Education and Labor. However, it is not a one-size-fits-all Federal solution. States are encouraged to build unique school to work systems that incorporate regional and local initiatives and respond to the particular conditions in each state. While the approaches may be different, one goal that every system has in common is to enable all youth to gain high levels of academic and technical skills toward a career.

Who Does School to Work Serve?

School to work programs allow equal access and full participation for all youth. The School-to-Work Opportunities Act makes specific reference to youth with disabilities, individuals from minority groups and disadvantaged youth.

Section 4 of the Act defines all youth as

> "both male and female youth from a broad range of backgrounds and circumstances, including disadvantaged youth, youth with diverse racial, ethnic, or cultural backgrounds, American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, youth with disabilities, youth with limited English proficiency, migrant children, school dropouts, and academically talented youth" [P.L. 103-239, Section 4 (2)].

Why Do We Need To Include Youth with Disabilities in School to Work Systems?

Just like anyone else, a person with a disability has many abilities. However, employment statistics show that youth with disabilities are dramatically unemployed or underemployed. A Louis Harris Poll (July 1994) found that 67% of individuals with disabilities between the ages of 16 and 64 are not working, although an overwhelming percentage of these individuals are able to work and want to work. Of those working, only 25% hold full-time jobs. School to work programs help close the unemployment gap by equipping every youth with employment skills for now and for the future.

Where Do Youth with Disabilities Fit in the School to Work System?

People with disabilities can produce just like anyone else, but where they stand apart is in their commitment and creativity to do the job.

The School-to-Work Opportunities Act ensures the equal access and full participation of all youth—including those with disabilities—in school to work programs and services. It is the intent and purpose of the Act that all youth, regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, disability, or other characteristic, have the same opportunities to participate in all aspects of school to work initiatives and are not subject to discrimination as participants in such programs. The Act guarantees equal opportunities for all youth to explore and experience various careers first-hand while still in school.

• The Components of Successful Job Matching

School to work initiatives help states and localities create a single, seamless system. There is no prescribed model to follow, yet three basic components are necessary to create programs that result in successful employment opportunities. The components are school-based learning, work-based learning, and connecting activities.

School-Based Learning

School-based learning provides students with opportunities for career exploration, instruction in academic and technical skills, and guidance in identifying employment and education goals. By exploring different career options, students can identify their interests and pursue study in a broader career major.

School-based learning strategies may include coordinating an integrated curricula across all subject areas; providing opportunities for all youth to complete inventories that assess career interests and experiences; or offering employment-readiness training such as job search and job maintenance skills.

Work-Based Learning

Work-based learning is defined as learning experiences and activities that are based on and take place in some type of work setting or simulated work setting. Apprenticeships, internships, co-ops, on-the-job training, career academies, school-based enterprises, occupational/technical labs, and job simulation are all examples of work-based learning. The aim is to ensure that all students have a planned job-training program and that educational experiences are related to the occupational goal. On-the-job work experience is the crucial element of this component. Workplace mentoring, instruction in workplace skills and expectations, work-study programs, and apprenticeship are other elements of workplace learning.

Both young people who work here are able to adapt the skills they have learned in the classroom to the job.

Connecting Activities

Connecting activities are designed to make learning relevant by merging school learning and life experience. They bridge school-based and work-based activities for each student by connecting the content and development of instruction in the student's area of interest. Connecting activities can be:

- matching students with employers
- establishing liaisons between education and work
- providing help to schools and employers to get partnerships started
- encouraging the participation of employers in the educational process
- making job placements
- collecting and analyzing outcomes of the school to work program
- forming linkages between youth development activities, industry, and the community

How Employers Can Become Involved

Employers who want to actively participate in school to work programs can do so through a variety of options.

Career Awareness

Career awareness activities help to link employers to a variety of school activities. These may include making presentations on workforce etiquette or career opportunities, or helping educators develop classroom curriculum. Career awareness activities simply communicate to young people the knowledge and skills necessary to make informed career-related decisions. Some of the career awareness activities that employers can become involved in include:

Career Talks. Employers visit students in the classroom and explain the work performed in their industries or companies.

Career Days/Career Fairs. Employers participate in special events to inform students about potential careers and help them to consider their interests and abilities carefully.

Workplace Tours. Employers offer tours of their workplaces, giving students and teachers an opportunity to talk with employees and observe workplace activities.

Career Exploration

Career exploration exposes youth to a variety of work settings, helping them to make decisions about future career directions or occupations. The exploration process involves investigating interests, values, beliefs, strengths, and weaknesses in relation to the demands and other characteristics of work environments. Youth gain information by watching work being performed, talking with employees, and actually trying out work under direct supervision of school personnel. Career exploration enables youth to make choices regarding careers or occupational areas of interest and can help prepare them for future jobs.

Employers play a major role in career exploration activities by providing a workplace environment for youth to gain practical experiences. These experiences allow them to acquire, practice, and demonstrate their academic and occupational skills. During career exploration activities, employers allow youth to investigate job tasks

based on their individual interests and talents. Opportunities such as these help youth make meaningful decisions that shape their future career paths.

Career Preparation

Employers can also participate in supervised work experiences that offer youth opportunities to try out specific roles in the workplace and develop effective work abilities and behaviors. As a result of these work experiences, young people are more likely to make a smooth transition from school to work. A few of these work experiences include:

Job Shadowing. Youth make brief worksite visits to spend time with individual workers to learn what their jobs entail. This offers young people the opportunity to explore different career options.

Internships. Youth participate in relatively short-term work placements (for only a matter of weeks or months), that are often tied to a school class or project and guided by a learning plan that targets specific competencies. Internships can be either paid or unpaid.

Multi-Year Work-Based Learning. Youth progress through planned sequences of more demanding work assignments over the long term and gain mastery of general and specific industry skills to reinforce rigorous academic learning. Postsecondary institutions recognize and credit work experience.

Cooperative Education (Co-op). In an arrangement between the school and an employer, each contributes to the young adult's education and employability. The young person is paid for working, either by the employer, the school's cooperative program, or by another employment program operating in the community.

Mentoring. The young adult is matched with an adult from the workplace who provides guidance and encouragement on career-related projects. If the young adult is working in the company, the establishment of a co-worker as a mentor provides natural support on the job. A mentor co-worker can assist youth in learning the job duties and adjusting to the organization, give advice about work, listen in general, and be a friend in the work setting.

Supported employment. The young adult is accompanied by a job coach provided by the local school or job placement agency. The job coach learns the job and provides on-the-job support as needed. This support may include providing prompts to carry out tasks, social cues, and modeling various aspects of the job.

We focus on providing job opportunities for young people who not only have the skills to do the job but to those who can add value to our organization.

System Building

Employers can help design new school to work programs by getting involved at the system level. As consumers of skilled labor, they can inform the school to work planning team of their specific needs to ensure that a well-designed system is in place to better prepare youth with disabilities for careers.

For more information on how you can participate in a school to work activity, contact the transition specialist, school to work coordinator or special educator at a local high school, or contact the individual listed on the inside cover of this booklet.

BRINGING A YOUNG PERSON WITH A DISABILITY INTO THE WORKPLACE

• Enriching the Work Experience

As with any young person, initiating a youth with a disability into the workplace culture differs from introducing an adult. It may take more time for the young person to adapt. Most likely, the school to work experience will be the young person's first exposure to a workplace, and it may seem very alien to them. A mentor or workplace supervisor can help by guiding them in learning both the technical and the social competencies demanded by the employment.

Whether the work experience is temporary or permanent, there are some basic strategies employers can follow to work successfully with youth, including those who have disabilities:

Get to know the young person. Ask about career aspirations, preferences, and skills. Knowing this information will help to identify what kinds of opportunities to offer the young adult while on the job. For example, in a job-shadowing situation, a young adult who has career aspirations in the medical profession should be allowed to spend time in several departments of a hospital or clinic.

Provide the young adult opportunities to make some decisions regarding their work-based experience. Allowing youth to express their choices and interests can help to increase their confidence levels and help them to grow as individuals. It also helps them learn how to make informed decisions.

Initiate youth to the workplace culture. When they begin work, young adults enter a new culture with its own rules, conventions, and norms. Offer explanations about the culture of the workplace to help them adjust to the work setting. Employers should encourage the young adult's curiosity, invite their questions, and allow for exploration opportunities.

Advise youth on career directions and opportunities. Working with adults provides a young person an ideal opportunity to understand what body of skills and

knowledge is necessary to pursue work in a particular field. An adult perspective can enlighten the young employee about the realities of the workplace and the importance of an education. A mentor might describe the hierarchy in an occupational area and explain the educational requirements associated with each step. This shows youth a concrete example of the connection between school learning and work. Young workers should also have the opportunity to understand the interplay of different departments and occupations within the organization.

Be clear and straightforward with directions and instructions. The workplace environment, with its protocols, policies, and procedures, typically is unfamiliar to youth. To ease feelings of uncertainty, employers need to provide workplace orientation and explain established company policies within the first few days. As the young adult gains proficiency, tasks can be assigned by giving the "what" and "why" while allowing the student to work out the "how." These opportunities help equip youth with decision-making and problem-solving skills and teach them to take responsibility for the outcomes of their actions.

• Planning For Disability Awareness — Sensitivity Training for Supervisors and Co-Workers

Sensitivity training can increase the awareness and confidence that people have in supervising and working with youth with disabilities. Disability etiquette is simply demonstrating respect for others by practicing common courtesies of professional interpersonal relationships.

Following are some simple rules of common courtesy.

Treat employees with disabilities like anyone else. Just as all employees are not the same, individuals with disabilities differ in personality, talents, and skills. If you feel uncomfortable around someone with a disability, learn more about that disability. You can do this by simply asking them for more information.

Having a disability in one development area does not mean there are limitations in others. Never equate a disability with other limitations. When working with a young adult with a disability, it may be useful to have some basic information about

what his or her specific disability may encompass. For instance, individuals who have a vision or speech impairment most often do not have impairments in other areas. Never assume a person with a disability cannot do something because of that disability. If you are not sure about a person's abilities or limitations, ask him or her as you would any other employee.

Ask before you help. Do not assume that because someone has a disability, he or she needs help. If you think someone needs assistance, first ask if assistance is wanted.

Recognize the talents of youth with disabilities. Youth with disabilities bring an array of talents to their jobs and, as anyone else, can be valuable resources to the company. If you have little experience working with individuals with disabilities, you may have trouble envisioning their capabilities on the job. Ask the young person what they are good at doing and what they like doing, then look for opportunities for that person to use those talents.

Use respectful language. Language expresses and influences ideas. The language used to depict a person with a disability can reflect the attitude of the speaker. Therefore, it is important to use positive, humanizing language. Careful use of language can result in less stigma and stereotyping. Some tips on how to think, speak, and write about persons with disabilities in positive terms are:

Emphasize the person first rather than the person's disability. By having the descriptor follow the noun (i.e., "person with a learning disability" rather than the "learning-disabled person"), the person is the focus, not the disability.

Avoid value-laden phrases. Phrases such as "victim of...," "afflicted with...," and "suffering from..." imply helplessness or distress.

Do not use the word "disease". Many disabilities are not a result of an illness or disease.

Avoid statements that imply a person can't do something because of a disability. For example, "She's deaf, but very bright" implies that the person's intelligence is connected to her ability to hear. Instead, emphasize their abilities.

Include people with disabilities as active participants. Interaction in social and work settings between employees with disabilities and those without disabilities helps to break down barriers and open lines of communication.

I think the perception of the general public is that a lot of individuals are not working because they do not want to work or that they cannot do the job. This perception is untrue. It is not that someone can't do the job but how the job matches that person's skills and abilities. As an employer, you have to be willing to look for an applicant who is best qualified for the job—this person just may be someone with a disability.

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By referring to youth with disabilities in positive terms, people learn to focus on their talents, skills, and contributions. As language becomes more positive, thought patterns and attitudes will begin to follow suit and employers will focus on the abilities of their employees, not their limitations.

This information has been adapted from: Thuli, K. J. & Phelps, B. R. (1994). ADA alliances to educate and employ people with disabilities: A handbook for employers, instructors, and teacher educators. Madison, WI: Center on Education and Work.

It is not difficult to accommodate someone with a disability nor is it always expensive.

Providing Accommodations for Increased Productivity

Reasonable accommodations allow youth with disabilities to experience equal opportunity in the workplace and to increase their productivity. Interestingly, the majority of accommodation or modification requests for the workplace made by individuals with disabilities typically are no different than requests made by individuals who do not have disabilities. According to the Job Accommodation Network (JAN), 80% of all job accommodations suggested by JAN cost companies less than $500. The good news for employers is that hiring a person with a disability does not necessarily mean restructuring the work environment, nor does it mean spending a lot of money.

"Reasonable accommodations" as defined by the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) are any changes in the work environment or the way things are customarily done that will allow people with disabilities equal employment opportunity. Employers must offer accommodations to individuals from the time of inquiry about employment to the end of employment.

Accommodations must be provided:

- during the job application and interview processes
- at the workplace when the employee performs the job tasks
- for any benefits and privileges of the job

Typical accommodations include:

- physical accessibility (e.g., installing ramps or lowering a desk)
- job restructuring (i.e., eliminating or reassigning certain job functions)
- part-time or modified work schedules (e.g., giving a worker a permanent shift so that he or she can access public transportation)
- altering when or how a job function is performed
- reassignment to another position in times of injury or change of condition (for existing employees)
- acquisition or modification of equipment or devices (e.g., TTY, low-vision readers)
- adjusting or modifying pre-employment test formats, training materials, and policies
- providing qualified readers and interpreters

Employers need to evaluate each situation individually, and provide individuals with accommodations that allow equal access and full participation in the work environment. According to the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, the number one request for reasonable accommodations by persons with disabilities is to have their employer and co-workers educated about their disability.

Many employers fear the costs of making accommodations. This concern is understandable, but employers should remember that the ADA does not require them to make an accommodation if it places an "undue hardship" on that organization. An accommodation would be considered an undue hardship if it costs the employer "significant difficulties or expense" [P.L. 101-336, Section 101 (10)].

For more information regarding reasonable accommodations or the requirements of the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act, call the Job Accommodations Network (JAN) at 1-800/ADA-WORK or the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission ADA Information Line at 1-800/669-4000 or 1-800/669-6820 (TTY).

Prior to the [young person's] first day on the job [senior management] met with all employees to inform them that [the young person] newly hired has a disability and may need some extra assistance occasionally. What a success. [The young person] has a natural support network on the job and completes his tasks effectively and efficiently.

• Supervising Young People with Disabilities

A 1987 study conducted by Louis Harris and Associates found that top industry leaders in large and small companies overwhelmingly rated employees with disabilities as good or excellent in their overall job performance. In addition, managers considered these employees to be performing their jobs as well as or better than employees without disabilities doing the same jobs. Moreover, eight out of ten department heads felt that individuals with disabilities were no harder to supervise than other employees. The cost of employing individuals with disabilities was about the same as employing individuals without disabilities, even when special accommodations were made.

As you read the following list of tips for supervising youth with disabilities, you will notice that the ideas presented are strategies employers should engage in for most employees, whether or not they are disabled.

- Introduce the new employee to others in the workplace.
- Clearly explain the operations of the job and the functions of the organization.
- Give the young adult clear job specifications verbally and in writing.
- Speak directly to the young person when giving instructions.
- Avoid being patronizing or sympathetic, even in your body language.
- If it appears the young person needs help in finishing a task, ask if he or she needs help. If they do, then ask how.
- Ask if the disability might limit the young adult in completing essential job functions and how he or she can best be accommodated.
- Counsel the young adult as needed.
- Call inappropriate behavior to the young adult's attention.
- Include the young adult in company-wide activities.
- Set an example on attendance and performance.
- Be flexible and open-minded to new ways of doing things.

THE BENEFITS AND REWARDS OF PARTICIPATING IN SCHOOL TO WORK INITIATIVES FOR YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

Human Resources and Productivity

At first I hired a person with a disability because a family member encouraged me to get involved. But now I hire [qualified individuals with disabilities] because they have a positive attitude toward work and other employees. They want to be here. They want to work.

Why do employers get involved with school to work initiatives for youth with disabilities? At first, most employers are motivated to hire a young adult with a disability because of some personal experience, such as having a relative or neighbor with a disability. This kind of exposure often sensitizes employers by dispelling any myths or stereotypes they once may have had about individuals with disabilities.

The Benefits

Although a personal connection may at first motivate an employer to hire a young person with a disability, the employer soon realizes there are several practical benefits as well. Through school to work experiences, employers can gain the following benefits:

Develop a high-quality workforce. Businesses involved in school to work are taking advantage of the opportunity to train their future workforce and generate a pool of skilled people. They see this as the chance to create a supply of qualified, younger workers who are prepared to meet the skill demands caused by rapid technological changes.

Expand their companies' productivity. When given the opportunity to grow and challenge their minds, young people can demonstrate their strengths and abilities. In fact, they might provide insights or perspectives on how to improve an aspect of the company's manufacturing, or how to streamline an existing process. These skills can help build and strengthen productivity within the company.

Develop fresh recruiting sources. Service providers who place youth with disabilities can become a critical source for businesses in locating and placing skilled people.

If companies can begin to rely on service providers such as teachers, transition specialists, or school to work coordinators as trusted placement personnel, costs and time spent in recruiting, selecting, and training new workers can be reduced.

Reduce new employee training costs. Businesses must become active in the education and training of all young people. By forming partnerships with education, business can have a hand in shaping our future labor pool. Such action, in turn, will result in saving employers time and money in the recruitment and training of employees.

Reduce the turnover rate of entry-level employees. School to work activities give employers the opportunity to secure skilled entry-level workers by preparing them for this role. An activity such as mentoring not only prepares the young adult for the job but can help turn him or her into a long-term committed employee.

If every employee here put the kind of effort [the young person with a disability] puts into her job, it would be a better workplace.

Evaluate potential employees in work setting. Work-based learning experiences such as internships, co-ops, and apprenticeships give employers the opportunity to observe the young adult on the job and evaluate their work skills and behaviors. At completion of the work-based experience, the employer has an opportunity to hire that young person.

Influence curriculum development. Employers who engage in school to work programs have the opportunity to collaborate on the development of the classroom curriculum by sharing with educators the kinds of skills they want from entry-level workers.

Opt for various financial incentives. Employers who participate in school to work partnerships by hiring youth with disabilities may be entitled to certain tax credits (see page 19, Financial Incentives for Employers).

Acquire committed employees. Research suggests that youth with disabilities typically are more committed to the job than their nondisabled peers. Specifically, employees with disabilities are:

- tardy less days than their nondisabled peers
- absent fewer days than their nondisabled peers
- more likely to stay with one company longer than their nondisabled peers

• Financial Incentives for Employers

Employers who decide to become involved in school to work initiatives by hiring youth with disabilities may be entitled to certain tax credits through one or more of the following:

- The Job Training Partnership Act
- On-the-Job Training
- The Disabled Access Credit (Section 44 of the Internal Revenue Code)
- The Architectural and Transportation Barrier Removal Deduction (Section 190 of the Internal Revenue Code)
- The Targeted Jobs Tax Credit (Section 51 of the Internal Revenue Code)

Job Training Partnership Act

The Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) authorizes the Federal government to distribute funds to states to establish programs that prepare youth and adults who face serious barriers to employment for entry into the labor market. A state, or one or more units of local government within a state, are designated as service delivery areas. Each service delivery area has a Private Industry Council, whose goal is to increase the role of employers in the training and employment of disadvantaged individuals.

The JTPA funds training programs for youth ages 16 to 21. In general, to be eligible for a JTPA training program, a candidate must be a student and economically disadvantaged. Additionally, the Act requires that at least 65% of the youth served by a JTPA program must face another serious barrier to employment besides economic disadvantage. In most instances, this is a disability.

JTPA participants have a written Individual Service Strategy (ISS) plan. This plan is written together with the individual participating in the JTPA program and the coordinating agency, typically the Private Industry Council. The ISS contains an employment goal, intermediate objectives, and a description of services to be provided. Service delivery areas must coordinate with the school to ensure a regular exchange of information regarding the youth's progress and needs.

On-the-Job-Training

On-the-job-training (OJT) is a short-term training program that enables a young person to work on a job site while learning the job duties from a co-worker or

supervisor. This work can be paid or unpaid and can lead to employment at the company sponsoring the training. OJT funds may be used to reimburse a private employer for providing the training at their organization.

Disabled Access Credit

The Disabled Access Credit (DAC) is a tax credit for "eligible access expenditures" incurred by an "eligible small business" in connection with complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). It allows eligible small businesses to receive a tax credit of up to 50 percent of access expenditures over $250 (but less than $10,250) for making structural and nonstructural reasonable accommodations.

Deduction for the Removal of Barriers

The Deduction for Removal of Barriers applies to any person who owns or leases a facility and removes architectural or transportation barriers to assist persons with disabilities. This incentive applies to deductions of up to $15,000 for certain expenditures incurred in connection with the removal of architectural and transportation barriers.

A deduction is limited to any expenditure incurred for the purpose of making a facility or public transportation more accessible. A "facility" is defined as all or any part of a building structure, equipment, road, walk, parking lot, or similar property. Deductions may not be used for expenses incurred for new construction or complete renovation of a facility. This credit is available to both small and big businesses.

Targeted Jobs Tax Credit

The Targeted Jobs Tax Credit (TJTC) is part of the Federal annual budget. The TJTC provides that employers who hire a person with a disability may deduct 40% of the first $6,000 in wages. For an employer to claim the credit, the eligible employee must be employed for 90 days (14 days for summer youth), or must have completed 120 hours of work (20 hours for summer youth).

For further information regarding tax credits for employers, contact the U.S. Department of Justice ADA Information Line at 1-800/514-0301 or 1-800/514-0383 (TTY).

PRODUCING SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL TO WORK PARTNERSHIPS

• The Employer's Role

The employer is a critical source from whom educators can draw insight into the business community. The employer is the contact who is knowledgeable about the industry and careers within the industry. The employer's role and responsibilities in the school to work partnership include, but are not limited to, the following activities:

It is a win-win situation for all of us. [The young person with a disability] not only gets a paycheck but he is gaining great job experience and the company gets a necessary job completed.

Communicate needs. The employer must articulate to the service provider the needs of the business as well as any concerns, questions, or changes. Employers must work with educators to ensure that the school curriculum reflects the demand of the workplace, that work-based and school-based learning are meaningfully connected to career majors, and that young people achieve the agreed-upon goals of the workplace standards.

Guide the design and management of the work-based experience. It is the employer's responsibility to coordinate with schools to plan beneficial work-based learning experience for all youth. To make this happen, the employer must work with the service provider in identifying the tasks and skills needed to perform a particular job successfully.

Prepare the workplace. It is the employer's responsibility to see that the workplace is an environment that is ready for participation by youth. Through the service provider, employers should secure appropriate training for co-workers and the necessary accommodations for the young person in the workplace.

Provide meaningful work-based learning experiences. Once youth are in the workplace, the employer assumes responsibility for their learning experiences on the worksite. For effective school to work transition to occur, the employer must agree to offer opportunities for young adults to learn a variety of tasks in an occupational area and to expose them to as many aspects of the business or industry as are available. Through this experience, youth learn new skills and competencies and grow as individuals.

• The Role of the Service Provider

Typically, a service provider is a transition specialist, special educator, school to work coordinator, or job placement specialist who builds and maintains the school to work partnership with an employer. The roles and responsibilities of the service provider include:

Effective planning and preparation. Service providers must know the interests and capabilities of the individual they are seeking to place in a work-based experience. This information should be documented in a career portfolio or a career plan. Service providers must also be well informed about the local labor market and must investigate job leads in order to prepare job profiles.

The [young person with a disability] was willing to work and demonstrated that they had the skills to successfully complete the job, so we gave him a chance as we would any other job applicant. It has been a very positive experience for everyone involved.

Quality products and services. To strengthen the partnership, service providers should offer employers a range of services and should provide any information employers may need about disabilities or school to work initiatives. Services might include follow-along and follow-up services.

Persistence. Service providers will need to persist in their placement efforts, realizing that several contacts and meetings may be necessary to give employers time to analyze information and to address individual concerns with other company personnel before a favorable placement decision is made.

Attentive customer service. Service providers must remain dedicated to identifying and addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities who have been placed on the worksite, as well as addressing the concerns and needs of employers.

Follow-up. Service providers have the responsibility to follow-up with employers and youth to ensure both are adjusting to the situation. Follow-up communications allow employers and the young person the opportunity to identify any accommodations or modifications needed for a positive experience. Keeping in touch with employers through follow-up calls and visits is critical to the success of school to work partnerships.

• Conclusion

Future workers need to be prepared for the changing demands of the marketplace. But unless business and industry assist by helping those future workers learn the necessary skills, educators cannot effectively prepare our nation's youth. By partnering with educators, employers can have a hand in shaping our future labor pool—from school to work.

School to work programs bring together employers, educators, and other members of the community to prepare youth for high-quality jobs. These initiatives are in every school and offered to every student. Requiring little more than a commitment to making it happen, school to work partnerships offer employers a variety of opportunities to help build their businesses.

Not one source of labor can be overlooked. School to work programs offer every youth, including those with disabilities, the opportunity to gain skills to meet the demands of the 21st century.

RESOURCES

• Selected National Resources

Following is a list of contacts related to the school to work transition of youth with disabilities.

Employment and Disability Related Resources

The ARC National Employment & Training Program
500 East Border, Suite 300
Arlington, TX 76010
1-800/433-5255
817/277-0553 (TTY)
www.TheArc.org

Association of Persons in Supported Employment (APSE)
1627 Monument Avenue
Richmond, VA 23261
804/278-9187
www.apse.org

Clearinghouse on Disability Information
Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services
U.S. Department of Education
Switzer Building, Room 3132
Washington, DC 20202-2524
202/205-8241 (Voice/TTY)

The Dole Foundation for the Employment of People with Disabilities
1819 H Street NW, Suite 340
Washington, DC 20006
202/457-0318 (Voice/TTY)

Foundation on Employment & Disability
3820 Del Amo Boulevard, Suite 246
Torrance, CA 90503
310/214-3430
310/214-1413 (TTY)

Goodwill Industries International, Inc.
9200 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, MD 20814
301/530-6500
www.goodwill.org

Job Accommodation Network (JAN)
809 Allen Hall
P.O. Box 6080
Morgantown, WV 26506-6080
1-800/526-7234 (Voice/TTY)
http://janweb.icdi.wvu.edu

President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities
1331 F Street NW, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20004
202/376-6200
202/376-6205 (TTY)
www.pcepd.gov

Rehabilitation Services Administration
U.S. Department of Education
Switzer Building
330 C Street SW
Washington, DC 20202-2500
202/205-5465 (Voice/TTY)
www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/RSA/

Marriott Foundation for People with Disabilities
P.O. Box 150
Washington, DC 20058
301/380-7523
301/380-6680 (TTY)

National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY)
P.O. Box 1492
Washington, DC 20013
1-800/695-0285
202/884-8200 (Voice/TTY)
www.nichcy.org

National Rehabilitation Information Center
8455 Colesville Road, Suite 935
Silver Spring, MD 20910
1-800/346-2742
301/495-5626 (TTY)
www.naric.com/naric

Employment Resources

Job Bank USA
www.jobbankusa.com

National Employer Leadership Council
1001 Connecticut Avenue NW
Suite 310
Washington, DC 20036
202/822-8027
www.nelc.org

The National Alliance of Business
1201 New York Avenue NW
Suite 700
Washington, DC 20005
1-800/787-2848
www.nab.com

National Association for Industry-Education Cooperation
235 Hendricks Boulevard
Buffalo, NY 14226-3304
716/834-7047

Small Business Administration (SBA)
409 Third Street SW, Room 8300
Washington, DC 20416
1-800/8ASK-SBA
www.sba.gov

U.S. Chamber of Commerce
1615 H Street NW
Washington, DC 20062
202/659-6000
www.uschamber.org

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
1801 L Street NW
Washington, DC 20507
1-800/669-4000
1-800/669-6820 (TTY)
www.eeoc.gov

ADA Resources

Employment

Equal Employment
Opportunity Commission
1801 L Street NW
Washington, DC 20507
1-800/669-4000
1-800/669-6820 (TTY)
www.eeoc.gov

Transportation

Federal Transit Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
400 Seventh Street SW
Washington, DC 20590
1-888/446-4511
1-800/877-8339 (TTY)
www.fta.dot.gov

Accommodations and Public Services

Architectural and Transportation
Barriers Compliance Board
1331 F Street NW, Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20004-1111
1-800/USA-ABLE (Voice/TTY)

Department of Justice
Office on the Americans with
Disabilities Act
Civil Rights Division
Public Access Section
P.O. Box 66738
Washington, DC 20035-6738
1-800/514-0301
1-800/514-0383 (TTY)
www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm

Job Accommodation Network (JAN)
809 Allen Hall
P.O. Box 6080
Morgantown, WV 26506-6080
1-800/526-7234 (Voice/TTY)
http://janweb.icdi.wvu.edu

The Dole Foundation for the
Employment of People with
Disabilities
1819 H Street NW, Suite 340
Washington, DC 20006
202/457-0318 (Voice/TTY)

• Selected School to Work Resources

National Level

It is critically important for employers and service providers to know about the school to work activities in their states. This includes knowing if your state has a School-to-Work Implementation or Development Grant and whether or not the state has received a Local, Urban, Rural or Indian Grant from the National School-to-Work Office. To find out if your state has any funding from the Federal government, contact the School-to-Work Learning and Information Center.

School-to-Work Learning and Information Center
400 Virginia Avenue SW, Room 200
Washington, DC 20024
1-800/251-7236
www.stw.ed.gov

In addition to learning about the projects funded under the School-to-Work Opportunities Act, employers and service providers should determine whether or not their state has a Transition Systems Change Grant or any Model Demonstration Projects funded from the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS). The majority of these projects have developed proven practices, strategies, and programs to help youth with disabilities make a smooth transition from high school to employment, further education, and independent living. To learn more about OSERS-funded Model Demonstration Projects, contact the National Transition Alliance. To learn more about Transition Systems Change Grants, contact the National Transition Network.

National Transition Alliance
for Youth with Disabilities
Transition Research Institute
University of Illinois
113 Children's Research Center
51 Gerty Drive
Champaign, IL 61820
217/333-2325
www.dssc.org/nta

National Transition Network
Institute on Community Integration
University of Minnesota
430 Wulling Hall
86 Pleasant Street SE
Minneapolis, MN 55455
612/626-8200
www.ici.coled.umn.edu/ntn/

State Level

Employers and service providers can get assistance from a variety of state and local agencies. Private and state employment agencies, private and state rehabilitation agencies, and private nonprofit organizations all provide a range of services both to employers and to young people with disabilities. Youth with disabilities can seek out these agencies to learn how to write a resume or interview for a job. For employers, these agencies can help fill a job vacancy by pre-screening a pool of applicants; writing job descriptions; training a new employee with a disability; providing disability training to the business; and helping accommodate an employee with a disability on the job.

Because each state is organized differently, these agencies will vary from locality to locality. To learn more about the agencies that are available to provide technical assistance in your community, contact your state departments of Education, Labor, or Human Services, or get in touch with the local Chamber of Commerce.

Local Level

On the local level, forming effective partnerships between schools and business will create the necessary linkages to make school to work opportunities happen for youth with disabilities. Employers and service providers should reach out to parents, to advocacy and "grass roots" groups, and to businesses who have successfully employed young people with disabilities. These stakeholder groups will prove to be a promising asset in planning and implementing school to work programs that serve youth with disabilities.

• Selected Program Resources for School-Business Partnerships

Many programs using best practices and state-of-the-art partnership strategies are identified as exemplary by professionals in the field and serve as models. Below are some programs that have successfully included youth with disabilities in transition from school to work systems. Feel free to contact either the school or the program coordinators. To learn about other school-business partnerships, search the NTA Model Programs Database on the web: www.dssc.org/nta.

Bridges...from school to work

The Bridges program develops internships with area businesses for students with disabilities in their final year of high school. It gives students job training and work experience that enhance work potential and also gives local employers access to an additional source of employees.

George P. Tilson, Project Manager
TransCen, Inc.
451 Hungerford Drive, Suite 700
Rockville, MD 20850
301/424-2002
gtilson@transcen.org

Job Accommodation Network (JAN)

JAN is an international network and consulting resource for accommodating persons with disabilities in the workplace, and is a joint venture with the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities.

Job Accommodation Network (JAN)
809 Allen Hall
P.O. Box 6080
Morgantown, WV 26506-6080
1-800/526-7234 (Voice/TTY)
http://janweb.icdi.wvu.edu

Youth Transition Program (YTP)

Policy makers and practitioners across the country agree that the creation of a seamless school to work system for youth requires restructuring current educational systems, but Oregon is one of the few states that have begun restructuring on a statewide level. Oregon's Youth Transition Program is a collaborative effort among the Oregon Department of Education, the Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation Division, the University of Oregon and public schools in local communities across the state. YTP currently operates in 26 sites across Oregon, helping youth with disabilities make the transition from school to work. YTP aims to provide a "new pattern of services" to students with disabilities by achieving two goals: enhancing the ability of students to enter competitive employment after leaving school and creating systemic change within schools and agencies serving youth with disabilities.

Dr. Michael Benz, Project Director
Secondary Special Education & Transition Programs
University of Oregon
175 College of Education
Eugene, OR 97403-5219
541/346-1408
mike_benz@ccmail.uoregon.edu

Competitive Employment Work and Transition (CEWAT)

CEWAT is a joint venture between Worksource Enterprises, Charlottesville City Schools, the Community Rehabilitation Program, and the Private Industry Council. These resources work together to structure successful experiences for all students, especially students "at-risk" of dropping out of school. Based in Charlottesville High School, CEWAT was initially created to help students with disabilities find paid job placements and develop good work behaviors. CEWAT provides job coaches who help students identify job prospects, apply for employment, and negotiate any difficulties that arise after they are hired. For more information, contact:

Lee-Davis Brown, Vocational Planner
Office of Career Assessment, Planning & Placement
Charlottesville City Public Schools
1400 Melbourne Road
Charlottesville, VA 22901
804/296-5131 x7291

High School/High Tech

The purpose of the High School/High Tech Program is to encourage students at the secondary level and below, to take the necessary academic preparation and skill training to pursue careers in engineering, science, and high technology fields. In co-operation with public and private funding sources, businesses, and school districts throughout the Unites States, High School/High Tech programs are active in: Pittsburgh, PA; Beaverton and Tillamook, OR; Huntsville, AL; Cocoa Beach, FL; Houston, TX; Cleveland, OH; Montgomery County and Prince George's County, MD; Los Angeles, San Mateo, and South Bay, CA; and Fairfax County, VA. The program provides paid internships and mentoring for high school students with disabilities.

Dick Sheppard
President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities
1331 F Street NW, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20004
202/376-6200
202/376-6205 (TTY)
rsheppar@pcepd.gov
www.pcepd.gov

AFFIX POSTAGE HERE

JEAN KOHANEK
NATIONAL TRANSITION ALLIANCE
ACADEMY FOR EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
1875 CONNECTICUT AVENUE NW, #900
WASHINGTON, DC 20009-1202

FOLD

MATERIALS

EVALUATION

FORM

When you have had an opportunity to review the Employer Toolkit, *please take a few moments to complete this evaluation form. Your experience of the materials is important to us and we welcome your comments and suggestions.*

To use this form as a self-mailer, fold in half and join the top edges with tape or a round label (do not staple). Affix a postage stamp where indicated and drop in the mail.

If you have any questions, or need more information about school to work transition programs, please contact:

Jean Kohanek
National Transition Alliance
Academy for Educational Development
1875 Connecticut Avenue NW, #900
Washington, DC 20009-1202

202/884-8182 Phone
202/884-8443 Fax
jkohanek@aed.org

Thank you for evaluating the Employer Toolkit.

YOUR INFORMATION

Name: _____

Title: _____

Employer: _____

Address: _____

_____

Phone: _____ TTY: _____

Fax: _____ E-mail: _____

EVALUATION

Circle the most appropriate response. (1 = least; 5 = most)

The material was useful to me:

1 2 3 4 5 unsure

The material was well organized:

1 2 3 4 5 unsure

The material was clearly presented:

1 2 3 4 5 unsure

INTENDED USE(S)

Check all that apply.

I plan to use the material as follows:

- ❑ Share with school to work transition providers, administrators, professionals
- ❑ Share with employers
- ❑ Share with co-workers
- ❑ Design new school to work programs for youth with disabilities
- ❑ In training or materials development
- ❑ Work with youth in my community
- ❑ Other (explain) _____

COMMENTS

What other information would interest you?

_____

_____

Comments:

_____

_____

_____

_____

THE PARTNERS OF THE NATIONAL TRANSITION ALLIANCE FOR YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES INCLUDE:

Transition Research Institute
University of Illinois
113 Children's Research Center
51 Gerty Drive
Champaign, IL 61820
www.ed.uiuc.edu/coe/sped/tri/institute.html

National Transition Network
Institute on Community Integration
University of Minnesota
106 Pattee Hall
150 Pillsbury Drive SE
Minneapolis, MN 55455
www.ici.coled.umn.edu/ntn/

Academy for Educational Development
1875 Connecticut Avenue NW, #900
Washington, DC 20009
www.aed.org

Council of Chief State School Officers
One Massachusetts Avenue NW, #700
Washington, DC 20001
www.ccsso.org

National Alliance of Business
1201 New York Avenue NW, #700
Washington, DC 20005
www.nab.com

National Association of State Directors
of Special Education
King Street Station 1
1800 Diagonal Road
Alexandria, VA 22314
703/519-3800